

## The Boy in the Rain

**Stephanie Cowell**

Regal House Publishing (Jun 1, 2023)

Softcover \$19.95 (312pp)

978-1-64603-349-2

Set in Edwardian England, Stephanie Cowell's novel *The Boy in the Rain* concerns the passionate romance between a painter and a divorced writer.

After a traumatic exchange with his uncle, nineteen-year-old Robbie, who is failing in his studies and would rather pursue his dream of becoming an artist, is sent to live with an aging vicar and university tutor, Mr. Langstaff. Confused about why anyone would want to marry, let alone be with, a woman, he becomes infatuated with Anton, his tutor's mysterious, elegant neighbor. Mr. Langstaff encourages their friendship, saying "You'll like him, lad!" But the friendship turns into a passionate, secretive, and dangerous affair. If the men are found out, their punishment will be severe.

Some confusion arises around the narrative's shifts between an omniscient voice and the men's internal thoughts, which reveal that both have an obsessive need for companionship. Still, with each chapter, Robbie and Anton's ideas and feelings on love, passion, and intimacy evolve. In its infancy, their relationship is akin to a boy's obsession with an older man (though Anton is only ten years Robbie's senior). Robbie, who keeps trinkets from his past crushes, is enchanted with Anton, wishing to "kiss the scar on his wrist." While Robbie yearns to be loved by anyone, wealthy and successful Anton mourns his failed marriage. Their romance reveals differences in feeling needed and wanted: Anton wishes to give the world, while Robbie struggles with being a "kept boy." When Robbie decides to study art in London, the men's correspondence creates more confusion. Hearsay and assumptions color the continuation of their messy connection.

*The Boy in the Rain* is a provocative, delicious novel about a couple's love, passion, and intimacy.

ERIN NESBIT (May / June 2023)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.*